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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 LAGOS 000470

SIPDIS

STATE FOR AF/FO, AF/W, AF/RSA, DRL, INR/AA

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [SOCI](#) [NI](#)

SUBJECT: MORE LAGOS VIEWS AND NEWS ON YAR'ADUA

REF: A. LAGOS 462

[1](#)B. ABUJA 2174 AND PREVIOUS

LAGOS 00000470 001.2 OF 002

Classified By: CG Donna Blair; Reasons Sections 1.4 (b) and (d).

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SUMMARY  
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[1](#)1. (C) Some Lagos observers point to the risk of renewed unrest in the Niger Delta and behind-the-scenes political machinations from possible challengers if VP Jonathan becomes head of state. Others pray for Yar'Adua to survive. END SUMMARY.

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STATE OF PLAY AND A SENSE OF JONATHAN  
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[1](#)2. (C) Yinka Odumakin, a ConGen Lagos activist contact, discussed President Yar'Adua's health condition in-depth with PolOff and PolSpec December 3. Odumakin doubts that the President "is coming back alive and if he does, he will be a vegetable," adding he had heard that the President was on life support. Odumakin offered that Nigeria currently has "the most incompetent President it has ever had" because, for the first time, even past leaders are publicly criticizing him. Furthermore, Yar'Adua has not been in a position to lead for a long time as several people at "the Villa," including his wife, have been holding him hostage and controlling him. Vice President Goodluck Jonathan is an "outsider and not a strong character." However, he will have support from the South-South, but only for ethnic reasons. Odumakin emphasized that the President's absence leaves Nigeria with no leadership. (NOTE: Odumakin is one of the 55 concerned Nigerians that issued a press statement on December 2, demanding that President Yar'Adua resign on health grounds. END NOTE.)

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DELTA VIEW  
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[1](#)3. (C) "The people in the Niger Delta are not fools," according to "Vanguard" Newspaper publication "Sweet Crude" editor Hector Igbikiowubo. VP Jonathan was not put in place democratically and is considered spineless. "He (the VP) will get what he deserves," Igbikiowubo said in a December 3 conversation with ConGen Lagos officers. "Nigerians will take care of the problem either constitutionally or not. Just because there is a constitution does not mean that it

will necessarily be followed or used," Igbikiowubo continued.

14. (C) Edo State Governor Adams Oshiomhole categorically denied in a telcon with PolOff December 4 press reports that he had allied with Governor Bukola Saraki and James Ibori to force VP Jonathan to resign. Oshiomhole noted that he is not a member of the People's Democratic Party and stressed that he supports the constitution. (NOTE: Oshiomhole is a former labor leader and enjoys widespread popular support even outside his home state of Edo. END NOTE.) PolOff plans to visit Edo State early in the week of December 7 and will follow up in a call on Oshiomhole in Benin City.

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WATCHING AND WAITING  
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15. (C) President Yar'Adua's condition was also a key point of discussion in a December 2 meeting between ConGen Lagos Pol/Econ reps and Toyin Caxton-Martins of Governor Fashola's senior staff in Lagos State. Caxton-Martins noted that many Nigerians suffer from the "Father of All" syndrome when it comes to the way they perceive government leaders. She believes that the secrecy surrounding the President's health condition stems from this kind of cultural norm, which she felt must die out if Nigeria is to develop into a modern democracy. Caxton-Martins continued that the secrecy has also made Nigerians feel like "their back is against the wall," and has caused unnecessary alarm about the President being ill.

16. (C) Another Lagos State contact reiterated that the Governor's office is watching the situation closely. "We are praying

LAGOS 00000470 002.2 OF 002

that the President will not die, but we firmly support upholding the constitution if he does," this Lagos Governor's office source emphasized.

BLAIR